



Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7866th meeting

Thursday, 19 January 2017, 1 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Skoog (Sweden)

Members:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
China	Mr. Shen Bo
Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
France	Mr. Delattre
Italy	Mr. Cardi
Japan	Mr. Bessho
Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
Senegal	Mr. Seck
Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Mr. Wilson
United States of America	Ms. Coleman
Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Peace consolidation in West Africa

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The meeting was called to order at 1.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/55, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Senegal.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to convey the heartfelt congratulations of the Government of Senegal to His Excellency Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia, who has just officially assumed office following the oath-taking ceremony that took place in the Embassy of The Gambia in Dakar. The ceremony took place in the presence, inter alia, of the Senegalese authorities; the diplomatic corps accredited to Senegal, including ambassadors of Security Council members; and Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

In this regard, we welcome the joint communiqué issued by the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at the conclusion of the ceremony, thereby strengthening the united approach that had consistently prevailed in the management of this issue. Senegal takes this opportunity to express its full gratitude to the international community for its unwavering support and firmness, which led to this outcome.

The draft resolution before us, submitted by the Senegalese delegation, is part and parcel of the ongoing diplomatic and political efforts of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations to find a solution to the post-electoral situation in the sisterly Islamic Republic of The Gambia. In Senegal, we say that Gambia is more than our neighbour. Senegal, as a State of the region, therefore thanks all members of the Security Council for their support for and solidarity with the efforts of ECOWAS and the African Union to overcome the attempt to usurp the will of the sovereign people of The Gambia, democratically expressed on 1 December

2016. In that regard, I must stress the appeal made today by President Adama Barrow to the international community, and in particular ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations, to help ensure respect for the sovereign will of the people of The Gambia.

In the light of all I have said, the Senegalese delegation calls on all Council members to vote unanimously in favour of the draft resolution before us.

The President: The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2337 (2017).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay thanks Senegal for its efforts within the Council and in Africa with respect to the situation in The Gambia.

However, as a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, I note that we should have preferred the negotiating process on resolution 2337 (2017), which we have just adopted, had been undertaken in a more inclusive manner. The resolution was circulated on Tuesday evening, with only a brief window for comments and without face-to-face negotiations, and was then put to a brief silence procedure before being issued in blue, which did not allow the various legitimate concerns expressed by Council members to be taken into account. Moreover, it was not made available in all official languages of the United Nations. Uruguay recognizes that the Security Council had to act urgently and take a timely decision in this instance, but that does not justify the failure to open the process to the dialogue and inclusiveness required when negotiating any draft resolution.

Uruguay, as a champion of the rule of law, democracy and the the freedom of expression, expresses

its support for the will of the Gambian people, expressed in the elections of 1 December 2016. In that regard, we were alarmed by the measures adopted by former President Jammeh, which represented a violation of the Constitution that threatened peace in the The Gambia and regional stability, and gave rise to the need for the resolution we have just adopted.

Uruguay reiterates its position, pursuant to Article 53 of the Charter of the United Nations, that no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council. Such authorization must be express, affirmative and prior. Uruguay underscores that nothing in resolution 2337 (2017) can be interpreted as express authorization of the use of force.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation voted in favour of resolution 2337 (2017) on the situation in The Gambia on the basis of the need to ensure the peaceful transfer of power in the country and avoid bloodshed and further destabilization. We also voted in support of the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union to unblock the post-electoral crisis through peaceful means.

We highly appreciate the mediation efforts of these organizations, as well as the countries of the region and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. We hope that the joint efforts will help to maintain peace and order in The Gambia. Russia recognized the election results of 1 December 2016, and from the very outset of the crisis has advocated a search through exclusively peaceful means to resolve it and to safeguard the security of its citizens and respect for their fundamental rights and freedoms in accordance with universally recognized democratic norms. We note the flexibility shown by the sponsors of the resolution, aimed at finding the necessary consensus in the Council.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia takes the floor to recognize the work undertaken by Senegal and of subregional and regional organizations with respect to the issue at hand. We also draw attention to our belief that the negotiating process was regrettably hasty. We understand the urgency of the situation, but we believe that prior negotiations could have facilitated a better

exchange of views and improved the text of resolution 2337 (2017), which we adopted today.

Pursuant to the first preambular paragraph of the resolution, we are committed to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of The Islamic Republic of The Gambia. Bolivia believes that we must continue to pursue mediation efforts and good offices to identify a peaceful solution to this problem. We do not feel that at this stage this situation poses a threat to international peace and security. Bolivia therefore believes that the adoption of the resolution cannot and should not be interpreted to represent Security Council support for or endorsement of the use of force. To that end, we would need a specific resolution providing such a mandate or endorsing such action.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I join others in welcoming the unanimous adoption of resolution 2337 (2017). I commend Senegal for its swift and decisive action in presenting the text of resolution 2337 (2017) today.

But in truth, the Council should not have to do this. The people of The Gambia spoke clearly at the elections in December. They chose Adama Barrow to be their President. Their voice now needs to be heard, and their will needs to be heeded by just one man.

Resolution 2237 (2017) is clear: former President Jammeh must respect the decision of the Gambian people and immediately hand over power. His failure to do so up until this point is only bringing uncertainty to the people of The Gambia. Despite this setback, the Gambian people have shown admirable restraint and stoicism by remaining calm in the face of uncertainty. They have given former President Jammeh time to consider the many options that are open to him. We look to all parties in The Gambia, particularly the security forces, to continue to act with restraint and to maintain that calm.

We welcome the work of the Economic Community of West African States to resolve this. At a time of unease in The Gambia, it is reassuring to see effective regional leadership on display. Mr. Jammeh has been given many opportunities by his neighbours and partners and, most important, by the Gambian people themselves. It is now time for him to do the right thing.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China voted in favour of resolution 2337 (2017). China has been following the developments in The Gambia since its presidential elections. We call on the parties concerned

in the country to remain calm, to put the interests of the country and of the people first and to resolve the ongoing political crisis appropriately, through dialogue and political consultation, in order to maintain peace and stability in The Gambia.

China has been consistently supportive of Africans settling African issues in the African way, and commends the positive efforts of regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, to help address Gambian issues through good offices and mediation. China supports the countries and organizations concerned in their efforts to bring their respective influence to bear; to step up good offices and mediation efforts; and to continue to encourage the parties to move towards a proper solution of the Gambian issue, and thereby contributing to regional peace and stability.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan welcomes the adoption today of resolution 2337 (2017), on the situation in The Gambia. We thank Senegal for its efforts to find consensus on the resolution. Kazakhstan commends the tireless mediation efforts of the Presidents of Nigeria, Liberia, Ghana and Mauritania, as well as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other stakeholders. Kazakhstan voted in favour of resolution 2337 (2017) for the following reasons.

First, we believe that it is important to respect the will of the people of The Gambia, as expressed in the result of the election last month. Kazakhstan is committed to peace and long-term stability in The Gambia so that its people can freely enjoy their rights and freedoms.

Secondly, the Security Council should seize the opportunity to send a clear message to the Government and people of The Gambia, as well as to the international community, that the United Nations is closely engaged and requests all stakeholders, including the Gambian defence and security forces, to exercise restraint. That message is also to encourage all stakeholders to prevent any steps that could lead to possible violence in the country.

Finally, with this resolution we call for a demonstration of wisdom, responsibility and political will to effectively resolve the current crisis and ensure the peaceful and orderly transfer of power to President Adama Barrow.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): Japan welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2337 (2017). Japan strongly condemns the refusal by Mr. Jammeh to transfer power to President Barrow, against the will of the Gambian people, which was demonstrated in the presidential election last December. Japan highly commends the strenuous mediation efforts undertaken by subregional and regional actors, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union to bring about a peaceful and smooth transition of power to avoid a crisis.

By unanimously adopting resolution 2337 (2017) today, the Security Council is sending a clear message to Mr. Jammeh to carry out a peaceful and orderly transition of power to President Barrow. He should do so immediately. The Council should work together with ECOWAS and the African Union to prevent any aggravation of the situation.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2337 (2017). My delegation thanks Senegal warmly for its leadership. From the beginning, France supported the efforts led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its African partners.

The 1 December elections in The Gambia were carried out in a way that is beyond reproach. They illustrate a phenomenon that may be commonplace elsewhere, but that is nonetheless extraordinary in West Africa. Democratic governance and respect for the will of the people are now taken for granted — a situation that none would wish to reverse. Last year, six of the 10 elections in the region led to a transition in power. Elections are taking place in a tranquil atmosphere and there is no thought of questioning their legitimacy. I am referring to Ghana, as the most recent example, but also to Nigeria, the Niger, Benin and Burkina Faso.

In The Gambia, the challenging of the results of the election by President Jammeh — even though he himself recognized them — was unanimously condemned by Economic Community of West African States, the African Union and the Security Council. They all called on Mr. Jammeh to respect the sovereign decision of his people and to agree to hand over power to President Barrow, in accordance with the Gambian Constitution. Since then, the countries of the region have spared no effort to reach a peaceful resolution to the crisis, pursuant to the charters of ECOWAS and of the African Union. The Heads of State and

Government of ECOWAS met on 17 December. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union met on 13 January specifically to deal with this topic. And the Security Council adopted a clear presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/19) on the matter.

France commends the tireless efforts of ECOWAS, the mediation efforts of President Buhari, President Johnson-Sirleaf, and President Mahama, who visited Banjul and have been in constant contact with Gambian stakeholders. In particular, we commend the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mohammed Ibn Chambas, who has done everything in his power to ensure a peaceful transition. We also welcome the efforts of Morocco and Mauritania, which, in a final push, used their diplomatic skills to ensure that President Jammeh accepted to step down from office in a dignified way at the end of his term.

We often refer in the Security Council to the need to strengthen preventive diplomacy. The Gambian crisis is an excellent example in that regard. No effort was spared by any of the actors involved to achieve a peaceful transition of power to the President-elect. At present, Mr. Jammeh continues to refuse to heed these appeals, in spite of all the guarantees provided by his successor to accord him the respect due him as former President of the Republic. Mr. Barrow took the oath of office this morning and today he is the legitimate President of The Gambia. That is why France thought that it was essential for the Security Council to make its position known and to adopt a resolution that sends a clear message to Mr. Jammeh today. We welcome the fact that resolution 2337 (2017) was adopted unanimously and that the Security Council has thereby expressed its full support to the efforts of the region to resolve this crisis.

Ms. Coleman (United States of America): The United States welcomes the adoption of resolution 2337 (2017). With the unanimous adoption of this resolution, the Security Council stands united in calling for a peaceful transition of power from one president to another; endorses the mediation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and upholds the clear determination of ECOWAS and the African Union that the will of the Gambian people — clearly and peacefully expressed — must be respected.

The patience and commitment to peace demonstrated by Adama Barrow and the Gambian

people since December have been remarkable. Gambian civil society organizations have refrained from violent demonstrations; instead, they have made their voices heard by issuing statements calling for a peaceful transfer of power. The Gambian people have placed their faith in ECOWAS and the international community to safeguard the integrity of the election, and we must not let them down.

We welcome the ECOWAS decisions from the fiftieth ordinary summit, held 17 December 2016 in Abuja. We applaud continued efforts by ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations to broker a peaceful transition, and call on all parties to exercise restraint and to avoid bloodshed. It is important that we support Adama Barrow, the democratic choice of the Gambian people. We are eager to work closely with Mr. Barrow and his team in order to help achieve the aspirations of the Gambian people.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): I would first like to thank the delegation of Senegal for its work on the text of resolution 2337 (2017). We support taking rapid action on the resolution, in the belief that the Council should make its voice heard in these crucial hours for the country's future and the stability of the region. We fully support the preventive diplomatic efforts that the international community, and especially The Gambia's neighbours, have been engaged in. We also commend the mediation by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the support of the African Union and the role played by Mr. Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa. All of that is proof of African ownership and leadership on the issue.

The about-face of former President Jammeh on the outcome of the presidential election, in which he was defeated, is deplorable. Today, however, the countries of West Africa and its subregional organizations are walking steadily along the path of democracy and the rule of law. At such a sensitive time, we would like to reiterate the urgings — of ECOWAS, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, the African Union and the Security Council in today's resolution — that the Gambian army should respect the will of the people, support a peaceful and democratic transition of power to the new President and stand loyally by the side of the country's elected authority. Today Mr. Adama Barrow is the legitimate President of The Gambia. We congratulate him on the swearing-in ceremony that just took place and that we attended.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We also welcome the Council's unanimous adoption today of resolution 2337 (2017), and we appreciate the work done by our Senegalese colleagues, who have discharged their responsibilities with flexibility and resolve in drawing the Council's attention to the issue as early as possible. We have indeed been following the developments in The Gambia very closely. In line with the position of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, Ethiopia fully supports respect for constitutional order in The Gambia and for a peaceful transfer of power aimed at preserving peace and stability there.

The political crisis in The Gambia could have serious ramifications not just for the country itself but for the entire region. We have seen how quickly things there have deteriorated and, for that reason, every possible effort must be made to ensure that it does not descend into chaos. The State institutions should not be allowed to collapse. While Ethiopia attaches great importance to that matter, we also believe that the usurpation of power and an unconstitutional move to retain it should not be allowed to succeed. In that regard, we are fully behind the ECOWAS regional efforts to resolve the current political impasse through dialogue, in full conformity with the country's Constitution and with respect for the will of the Gambian people. We believe that it is important to ensure that the Security Council supports the efforts of ECOWAS and the African Union and continues to send a unified message.

That is why Ethiopia supported the adoption of today's resolution. We commend Senegal for accommodating the concerns expressed by members during the negotiation process, with a view to facilitating the Council's unity. It is vital that we maintain that unity of purpose. We also salute all the members who showed the flexibility needed to ensure the resolution's adoption by consensus.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (spoke in Arabic): Egypt voted in favour of the Security Council's adoption today of resolution 2337 (2017), on the developments in The Gambia, because we hope that it will eventually help to achieve a breakthrough in the current political impasse there. We believe in the importance of the Council's aim, which is to promote and support the brave and principled positions of the regional Powers concerned, represented by the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, and which also

coincide with our deep-rooted belief in the necessity of finding African solutions to African crises.

Egypt joined the unanimous consensus on the resolution after the introduction of important improvements into the text, and in that regard I would like to thank the delegation of Senegal for its flexibility. We were anxious to see the inclusion in the resolution of wording reflecting one of the most important purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which is the peaceful settlement of disputes. We believe that efforts to achieve that should be exhaustive if we are to avoid chaos and uphold the principles of international law. However, in the light of the last amendment to the draft, which underlined the importance of a political settlement of the impasse in The Gambia, we are convinced that today's resolution does not endorse any mandatory automatic enforcement, as such processes require the Security Council's clear and unquestioned authorization, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, Egypt hopes that the political crisis in The Gambia can be brought to an end through the assumption of office of the democratically chosen President-elect, Mr. Adama Barrow, because we badly need a shining example of a peaceful democratic transition of power on our continent that can ultimately enable it to create a bright future for its peoples.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine) (spoke in French): Ukraine welcomes the Security Council's unanimous adoption today of resolution 2337 (2017). My delegation would also like to congratulate Mr. Adama Barrow, who was inaugurated today as the new President of the Islamic Republic of The Gambia. We hope he will soon be able to return to his country in order to complete the transition of power and begin fulfilling his duties so as to ensure peace and stability in the Gambia.

Since the announcement of the results of the presidential elections of 1 December, the international community has been working hard to convince the outgoing President to respect his country's Constitution. In that regard, we commend the efforts of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and of Nigeria's President Buhari, as the ECOWAS mediator in The Gambia, Ghana's former President Manama and other regional leaders who have worked to resolve this impasse. We would also like to pay tribute to the role played by Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary

General for West Africa and the Sahel, and to thank the delegation of Senegal for its proactive efforts on the issue.

It is regrettable, however, that despite the clearly expressed will of the Gambian people and intensive efforts on the part of the international community, including the Security Council, to achieve a peaceful transition of power, the situation has deteriorated to the point that a Council resolution is needed. I want to emphasize that, in the light of recent developments, we must step up the diplomatic pressure and the political initiatives supporting it if we are to resolve the political crisis. The adoption of today's resolution is an integral part of those efforts to ensure peace in the Gambia and implement the election results.

In conclusion, we believe that right now the most critical immediate task is to convince Gambia's military and security actors to remain calm and refrain from any action that could lead to the deterioration of the country's human rights, security and humanitarian situation.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as representative of Sweden.

Sweden welcomes the Security Council's adoption today of resolution 2337 (2017) and its display of unity once again on The Gambia. I would like to add my voice to those expressing appreciation for the work of Senegal in that regard. The resolution affirms the Council's political support for Mr. Adama Barrow as the democratically elected President and legitimate representative of The Gambia. It is an important effort for conflict prevention on the part of the Council and a positive example of action under Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council has given its political endorsement to the commitment of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union to ensuring respect for the outcome of the election. It emphasizes that all stakeholders, inside and outside the Gambia, must exercise restraint and respect for the rule of law. We are confident that the regional mediators will continue working for a peaceful transition and the restoration of normalcy in the Gambia.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.

